

(報告)

海外研修

平松仁史

Last summer I got the chance to have the over-sea study for two months. Almost all the members had finished "Tsukuba Kenshu" before and only we three, who teach at Fuzoku Gakko, had not taken the Tsukuba Kenshu yet.

The special program for us Japanese teachers was well organized and designed to give us as many extensive practices in speaking, reading and understanding America as possible. Though most of the instructors were younger than we Japanese teachers, they devoted themselves to making us understand without reserve.

I am afraid, some of the instructors were so accustomed to the teachers from Japan. They had taught Japanese teachers a few times, and they knew the difference of the way of thinking between American people and Japanese people. Our answer to a question given by the instructor had to be able to make him persuade. If we don't change our way of thinking, our answer can't be understood perfectly or could not satisfy him. Only a few instructors wanted us to have a discussion as American people do. Our great effort to seek for the proper answer which would persuade the instructor was so worthwhile. We had to learn the American people's way of thinking, and at the same time this effort made it possible for us to understand the people. I think that other instructors should not have compromise with Japanese people's way of thinking.

Though there are so many things I should write on this report throughout the life in Minnesota University, I'd like to report mainly about the individual research trip for ten days. The theme I brought forward was "To study about the dialect in America". Soon after I got to the University of Minnesota, I began to do some. However, the more I tried studying about the dialect, the more difficult it became to me. My plan to study something about the dialect was as follows.

1. To Make a list of the words which indicates the characteristics of pronunciation in each part of America (Minneapolis, Boston, Washington, New Orleans, Dallas, Denver and New York)
 2. To ask as many kinds of people as possible to read the words
 3. To record the pronunciation in a pocket type tape recorder
 4. To talk with the people and try to recognize the dialect
 - Your name, please.
 - How long have you been here? (Answer please.)
- | | | |
|---------|----------|-----------|
| 1. see | 18. go | 35. my |
| 2. sit | 19. five | 36. nine |
| 3. get | 20. out | 37. king |
| 4. Mary | 21. oil | 38. title |
| 5. cat | 22. hear | 39. voice |

6. calm	23. bear	40. thing
7. stop	24. hear	41. then
8. all	25. core	42. them
9. omit	26. order	43. sun
10. floral	27. port	44. zone
11. book	28. tour	45. ship
12. up	29. put	46. vision
13. bird	30. but	47. high
14. car	31. tooth	48. ring
15. ago	32. dig	49. yes
16. actor	33. keep	50. wing
17. lake	34. good	51. chair
		52. bridge

The dialect, the local characteristic of speech, is composed of two things, I think. One is pronunciation and intonation, and the other is words. I think that there are not so many particular words which can be understood only in a certain district, though the element of 'words' in Japan is so complicated. For example, in my home city Kanazawa, we often use the word 'DARA' instead of 'BAKA', which is understandable only in the Hokuriku district. And it is used as 'ahonDARA' in the Kansai district. I am sure that the number of such words has become less and less because of the development of the transportation and mass communication but I don't know how many such words we use in our daily lives now. According to one of my acquaintances, who is a navy captain and has been to many parts of America, in America they don't have many such words as 'DARA' in my district. People in the South use 'care of' instead of 'take care of'. Such a case is very rare, he says.

When I tried learning the dialect in America, the biggest problem was how I could recognize the difference of pronunciation between standard English and the dialect, and at the same time the difference between the slang and the dialect. To my regret, my ability for English conversation is not good enough to recognize those differences. Even if people speak to me in standard English, if they speak in natural speed, I can not understand well. And this means it is impossible for me to learn about the dialect in America.

The country of America is often expressed as a melting pot. I don't know how many kinds of races are in America, and this matter makes it quite difficult for me to listen to the speech by them. A man who or whose father came from Germany speaks English in Germanism pronunciation. Persons who live in the China Town speak in very strange intonations. Though young generations seem to speak pretty beautiful English, the older people's English is very queer to me. And this also I can't distinguish from the dialect. Taxi drivers, waiters or waitresses in a restaurant, a bar or a hotel; these people who are not well-educated speak very strange English. I asked about twenty persons, in all, to read the list of words, and two of them could not read letters well. I hear almost 15 per cent of Americans are not able to read and write letters, to my

surprise. Pronunciation and intonation: this element is too complicated for me to study. To tell the truth, I found this fact little by little during my staying in Minneapolis for a month and before leaving there, I should have prepared another theme for my individual research trip.

Some Americans say, "We have no dialects in our country," and others say, "We have some." I wondered which was right. This is the reason why I began to be interested in the dialect in America. I could not believe that no dialects could be heard in such a big country.

Surely they have some kinds of dialects. For example, Boston accent or Southern accent. But the dialects in America are not so complicated as the ones in Japan. At least they are able to make conversation each other in their own dialects. How about in Japan? Is it possible for us to talk together in our own dialects? No, we can't. I can't understand the dialects spoken in Tohoku or in Kyushu. They seem as if they were different languages to the people who live in another district. Compared with the complicatedness of dialects in Japan, the ones in America seem to be so simple. Against the expression, "We have no dialects in our country," I can't say, "Wrong." And at the same time I can't say, "Wrong," against "We have some dialects." The both are right, I think.

Now I remember one thing: no dialect is heard in Hokkaido. I've been there three times and have found this correct. Of course people there don't speak standard Japanese, but wherever I called at I could understand what they spoke without any difficulty. It is not too much to say that no dialect is heard in Hokkaido. Can't we find any common conditions between in Hokkaido and in America? I am sure the reason is this: people in both places flocked together from many parts or countries to live there. It is very important for them to speak correctly when they would try getting good information.

Though I could not learn much about the dialect in America, I could find this point with reluctance. And this unwilling result was in some measure foreseen before my departure for the trip. I thought I should not miss the chance to make contact with many people in various parts of America. So I prepared another plan.

This visit to America from July 25 to September 20 in 1981 was my third one. In these six years, to my surprise, goods imported from Japan have been increasing so rapidly. Not only cars, TV sets but also ball-point pens, pocket calculators are easily found. The disparity of the trade between Japan and America has been a big problem these years. I want to know what the American people think about it.

Four years ago when I was staying in Pensacola in Fla., I was invited to a dinner. After dinner we were about to drink coffee.

Husband: (serving coffee) Would you tell me where we should drink coffee?

Wife : At any place you like.

Husband: Oh, no. Please tell me. I want to drink coffee at the place you like.

Wife : Then, here.

(He brought cups and the coffee pot lightheartedly. And we began to drink coffee.)

I was so sorry but the coffee was not delicious to me because of my feeling pity for him. I had often heard that the women in America own the positive right in the family and the society. Instead of this, this husband seemed to be too poor. I want to know the average actual condition of the family.

These two are my next plans in stead of studying more about the dialect through my individual trip. I did in the style of the public opinion poll. I asked people one after another in many places. But it took so long time to ask a person eight questions. So I prepared blanks of the public opinion poll and ask to write down the answers on the paper.

Now I must tell an unhappy event. From New Oreans I sent a parcel to my house in Kanazawa as 'special delivery', in which some books and almost one hundred sheets of paper were. And these sheets of paper were blanks of the public pinion poll which had already been done in Boston, Pesacola and New Oreans. Till the end of December I could not receive the parcel. I asked the post office to look for my precious one hundred sheets of paper. One of the post office workers did his best to try to find my parcel. But it was in vain. I haven't got it yet still now. I have lost almost half of the results of the public opinion poll, I have another half of the results though.

The following is the results.

(Form)

PUBLIC OPINION POLL

1. Date: _____ ,
2. Solver: (a. Man b. Woman)
3. Age: _____ (if possible)
4. The place where you live:
5. Questionnaire:
 - 1) What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'Japan'?
(1 word please)
 - 2) Have you ever been to Japan or would you like to go to Japan some day?
 - 3) What kind of Japanese products do you own?
 - 4) Japanese products are well-made. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
 - 5) So many things have been imported from Japan these years. What do you think of this?
 - 6) Do you have a family? If 'yes', who is the head of your family?
 - 7) What is the main purpose you are looking for in your life?
 - 8) Do you think Japan should have a stronger military forces?

(reason)

--- Thank you very much ---

too many products are imported from Japan makes a big problem.

----- 12%

Q 6-- Do you have a family? If 'yes', who is the head of your family?

Father ----- 58%

Mother ----- 22% (70 per cent of them have a single parent family.)

Both ----- 14%

No family ---- 6%

Q 7-- What is the main purpose you are looking for in your life?

Happiness ----- 20%

Financial security ----- 12%

To keep family ----- 10%

Good relationship ----- 7%

To pursuit of dream ----- 7%

Leisure job scholarship man woman

Q 8-- Do you think Japan should have a stronger military forces?

Yes ----- 30%

- Japan should defense herself.
- The balance of the military power is important.
- Japan must be a keystone in military sense.
- Japan must keep Asian peace.
- It is your job to defense your own country.
- Korea is unstable. Soviet Union has military bases in Kurile Islands.
- Each country should make effort to avoid wars.

No ----- 27%

- Even in America, there are many different opinions.
- Japan had better save money.
- Japan might make a war against the U.S.A.
- No more Pearl Harber
(These two are by old women who lost their husbands in the last war.)
- I am against military.
- I hate violence (wars).
- Only self defense is enough, I wonder.

I don't know. ----- 43%